

THE CEA CRITIC

Formerly THE NEWS LETTER of Durham, N.C., English Association

Vol. No. XVI—No. 2 Published at Northampton, Mass., Editorial Office, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass.

February, 1954

The Student and the English Teacher

A storm has arisen over the subject of student evaluation of college teaching. Prof. R. L. Armstrong's outburst in the Sept. *Critic* is significant because it represents a point of view held among college teachers.

I am concerned about the attitude toward students among college teachers generally—and English teachers in particular—reflected by Mr. Armstrong's article.

The Rising Tide

This attitude is likely to become more rather than less prevalent, for the colleges and universities will soon be confronted by a crisis unprecedented in the history of our nation: The great flood of young people engulfing the elementary schools has begun to inundate the high schools. College enrollment figures have already begun to mount, and they will soon be shooting skyward: it is estimated that the total college population will double during the next twenty years.

"Hooliganism" is on the march.

A Challenge

I think that this great wave of 18-year olds about to engulf our colleges is not a calamity. I think, on the contrary, that it is a great opportunity and that there may not be another if we fail.

Let us charitably assume that there are very few teachers who are afflicted by student prejudices—few who permit distrust to breed distrust, hostility to breed hostility, expectations of the worst to bring about the worst; few who share Professor Armstrong's view that "student and teacher are born enemies."

What of those of us—everyone here—who care and care deeply, and try and try mightily, and despair and despair greatly because our students come to us so badly prepared for college work?

What can we do?

A Positive Program

First: We must regain control of the educational policies of the public school systems that produce our students—control now firmly held by the educationists.

Second: We must preserve control of the educational policies of our colleges—control now seriously weakened by educationists and administrationists. (I don't think I've seen this last term before. It may be useful in referring to administrators who have forgotten their humble origin—or who never really were professors—and who think and act like executives.)

Third: We must constantly work for the improvement of our undergraduate curricula and of our pedagogical techniques.

The graduate schools need to be more concerned about all of these problems or they will discover, in ten or twenty years—or possibly this year—that they have little or no relationship to undergraduate programs.

Students As Teachers

Any consideration of teaching effectiveness must necessarily involve a consideration of the relationship of the teacher to his student. We all know that we learn

by teaching. Our students will learn most when we regard them as potential teachers, i.e., as individuals capable of making a contribution to the intellectual development of themselves, of their fellow students, and of their teachers. No real discussion can proceed from any other basis.

One very important way in which we can demonstrate our acceptance of our students as individuals is to invite them to express their opinions about our teaching effectiveness.

Student Evaluations

There are other good reasons for such an invitation. Our professional organizations—including CEA—are doing a great deal of talking about improvement in college teaching. But in the meantime it is the scholar who advances professionally. "An excellent teacher but" is the permanent evaluation of many a permanent instructor or assistant professor who neglects research and publication.

An administrator who wishes to encourage and advance good teachers must find out who they are. Of course, teachers are being appraised all the time, whether they like the idea or not. The question is whether student opinion surveys can help the administrator do a better job.

Types of Questionnaires

When student comment is voluntary, the views expressed tend to be the views of grumbler, idolators, or sycophants. When a questionnaire is broadcast through whole classes, responses tend to be based upon very casual judgment; for if the student has nothing to gain, he has no direct motive for doing the job well. Finally and most important, those who study the questionnaires and report on them have no way of discriminating between the wise and foolish student judges.

Objective questionnaires have also to be boiled down to a set of statistics, in which faculty member emerges as a percentage, "the coefficient of the correlation of multiple determinants in a non-subjective procedure for evaluating pedagogical competency and/or incompetency." And the questions asked, if they are to elicit answers reducible to statistics, are likely to be leading questions eliciting answers reflecting the point of view of the questioner rather than that of the student.

Perhaps we don't know precisely what a good teacher is, but one may be sure that he is not a percentage or a coefficient of anything. He is a human being and should be judged by humanistic standards. It may well be that one predominant virtue will more than counterbalance twenty small vices; yet its possessor would show up on the score board as a five percenter. One wonders how the great teachers of all time, from Socrates to George L. Kittredge, would rate on many of the objective questionnaires prevalent today.

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THE VALUES IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Before we teachers of English launch a plan of co-operation which is to bring aid and comfort to a distracted world, we had better be clear in our own minds on what we are to co-operate. We have so often enunciated the important services to humanity and to society which literature renders, that we complacently assume that these truths are self-evident. This is by no means the case. Our university colleagues have very vague ideas of what we are about. They believe that our job is to teach students to write better than they think or that we are grammarians from whom they can discover whether or not they may say "He don't."

Superstition and Quackery

Others, particularly social scientists of sundry sorts, have an ill-concealed contempt for what we are doing. A few years ago George A. Lundberg, a prominent sociologist, contributing to *Harper's Magazine* an essay entitled "What to do With the Humanities?", contended that the humanities in general and literature in particular have long ceased to have any appreciable influence on human conduct. This is natural, the author goes on to say, for our subject matter is (1) "an amorphous body of lore," (2) "a collection of esoteric fragments of knowledge," (3) "superstition and quackery," familiarity with which serves little more than as a badge of class distinction. The only function Mr. Lundberg would preserve for literature is "The Creation of and Conformity to artistic standards."

Teach Men How To Live

Such denigration of our profession demands that we close ranks and, if possible, agree on just what are the distinctive values inherent in literature. My position is that its peculiar services can be rendered solely to the individual, that the larger social effects of the study are by-products of the radical influences it can and should exert on the individual.

At least since the appearance of English humanists in the early sixteenth century, literature has been awarded an important place in the curricula of schools and colleges because it was supposed to teach men how to live. Sir Thomas Elyot in his *Boke Of the Governeur* carries this belief to quaint extremes. In his eyes even dancing taught desirable forms of conduct,—prudence for example. He and other humanists were sure that aesthetic delight was morality's maid of honor.

Or How To Grow Up

The best current theory takes the same position, but phrases it in a different way. We now assert that literature serves as one of the approved methods of teaching us how to grow up. A child begins his life as a completely self-centered little animal, trailing few clouds of glory from Heaven at his birth. His growth in mental and emotional maturity must follow step by step his growth in

body. And that is accomplished by encouraging him to accept little by little a more and more complex set of human relationships, or to quote Harry Overstreet, of "linkages of affection and sympathy."

Sympathetically guided direct experience with other boys and girls or men and women will lay the foundation of this growth. But as one grows older, he will find one of his most valuable aids in the establishment of these wider kinships is the imagination, of which the supreme triumph is great literature. Understanding a great drama like *Hamlet* or a great epic like *Paradise Lost* or a great novel like *Tom Jones*, *Emma* or *The Ordeal of Richard Feverell* demands at least the partial identification of one's mind and heart with that of another and presumably greater human being. This high form of imaginative activity tends to liberate one from the infantile self-absorption of a child and from the precariously balanced emotional equilibrium of a man of arrested emotional development and to hasten his establishment as a well-adjusted member of a community of adults. The result of this process is to free one's impulses to action from inner compulsions and to enable one to accept social responsibility gladly.

How It Happens

Why is it that, following the career of a great fictional character like King Lear, one advances and confirms this maturing process more effectively than through encounters with human beings in the daily walk and conversation of life? It is, in the first place, because we can see the imaginative creation from the beginning of its significant experience to its final triumph or catastrophe. In *King Lear* the catastrophe is the triumph.

In the second place, the career of a character in literature is presented with the aid of the insight and the literary power of a great artist. This enables our understanding to be felt in the blood and felt along the heart.

Literature And Happiness

Great literature in an even more direct way fortifies the spirit of man and brings him the most durable sort of happiness. For happiness, we know, is nothing that can be sought and gained by direct assault. Happiness is merely an all-clear signal that the mind sounds when it feels itself suddenly or permanently released from tension and anxiety. It is true that love in its personal sense and in its broader significance of charity, and that successful achievement have always been precursors of happiness. And fully as important have been the agencies of religion, music and fine art. And to my mind great tragedy is the form of art which most surely educates the emotions and fortifies the spirit.

The full experience of a great tragedy does not leave one un-
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THE CEA CRITIC

Published at 15 Armory Street
Northampton, Massachusetts

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LEE E. HOLT
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ROBERT T. FITZHUGH

Published Monthly, September through May

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Associate Member, American Council on Education
(All official mail to College English Association
11 Old Chapel, University of Massachusetts,
Amherst, Mass.)

Annual Subscription, \$2.00

Re-entered as second-class matter January 24,
1952, at the post office, Northampton, Mass.
under the Act of August 24, 1912.

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English Association.

Values in Literature

(Continued from Page 1)

happy, much less in despair over the business of being a human being. Through tragedy we gain a deepened understanding of the great adventure of living and a renewed assurance that it is of supreme value. We discover that man is a more admirable creature than we had suspected. His conflicts with evil both within his soul and with the world test and affirm his courage and his nobility. This experience makes us realize that the virtues of a great tragic protagonist are in some measure our own and that if we are wise we can marshall them not to defeat but to victory. Thus we can scorn the idea that we are slaves of chance, of our environment, or of our subconscious, and in the process attain dignity and integrity of soul.

Elation as a Criterion

Now by applying these criteria we can determine which works of English literature contain authentic value and which do not, which we should teach and which we should not. Let us begin with an obvious case—the productions of the current cult of unintelligibility. They are glorified crossword puzzles, for the solution of which only a kind of perverted ingenuity and a superficial knowledge of Freud are demanded. The perplexed response made to a literary production of this sort is incompatible with the elation that an authentic work of art produces. The suffusion of reason with emotion which Wordsworth calls "reason in her most exalted mood" becomes impossible. Most of the poems of Dylan Thomas are of this sort, as is, of course, *Finnegan's Wake* and a good deal of *Ulysses*. The authors of these works fancy they are letting their

subconscious speak to your and my subconscious. But the "id" by definition is insane and must be cabined, cribbed and confined if a civilized man is not to go primitive. Certainly works like these contain no valid deductions from general experience. Not by any flogging of the mind can we extract from them any of the values that we are talking about.

These works in which the meaning is deliberately concealed represent but one type of literature which is erroneously being studied in classrooms and enormously derogating from the prestige of English literature and the other humanities.

History of Literature No Answer

At this point I think I should make it clear that I do not believe that the distinctive values of English literature can be found in the study of the history of literature. The prime assumption of that discipline is that one book comes out of another book. The contributors to the many volumes of the *Cambridge History of English Literature* make that assumption. The world never penetrates the covers of these books. For that reason no student becomes aware of his cultural heritage through the kind of study which this sort of history stimulates. The study which reveals most effectively our cultural past is the history of ideas, their inception, their growth, and their enrichment of works of pure literature.

Nor Comparative Literature

Nor is the popular attempt to discover the world through literature more than an adjunct to the actual study of literature. By reading important works of Swedish, Italian, French or other literature, one may of course learn much about the social, political or moral life of a given nation. In brief one may become acquainted with the elements which go to the making of a poem, a novel or a play. A genetic study of a play or a novel may have a good deal of scientific interest, but it neither adds to nor subtracts from the aesthetic appeal of the work in question.

Entertainment

In the above restatement of what is familiar to all of you, I have omitted some other direct services which literature can render the individual. It can, for example, offer us harmless entertainment a little like that of baseball or of football. Everyone, so the experts say, should have one harmless infantility. Literary works like *The Importance of Being Earnest*, or *The Millionaires* fill this bill.

Vicarious Experience

Literature also is vicarious experience. A man who reads widely need never be at a loss when confronted with any sort of experience in his life for he has probably seen the same problem posed and solved somewhere in the books he has read. Literature can also serve as a solace for the pressures and ills of everyday life and an escape from them into a self-sufficient world having little or no relationship to the burdens of actuality. Literature may also invoke a mood of contemplation in which the reader creates ideals and a desire to move toward their attainment. At such moments

On Retired and Exchange Professorships

I suggest two additional but worthwhile duties for the CEA, both perhaps for its Appointment Bureau.

One is a solution to the present problem of the shameful neglect of capable retired professors of English; the other is a system of exchange of English teachers in the United States.

Retired Professors

I. Problem. Every year a certain number of English professors are forced to retire for one reason only. They have reached the age of 65, 68, or 70 years. Many of these people, I believe, retire unwillingly; they would like to go on teaching somewhere; and the fact that many receive an emeritus title is small consolation. For many of them, an arbitrary retirement age has little if any relation to their physical and intellectual capabilities.

What an unnecessary waste of human wisdom, intellect, scholarship, and personality! And what splendid opportunities for other colleges and universities to benefit by such teachers through appointments (one year or longer?) as Visiting Emeriti Professors. The institution visited could benefit in numerous ways—through their wisdom and experience and through their influence on English and non-English majors, younger and older members of an English staff, the general faculty, and the community.

Solution. For a very small fee or as a professional service, CEA should push a vigorous campaign to provide both a list of retired professors desiring to teach for a few additional years and a list of colleges and universities willing to benefit by using these professional resources.

Under this plan, eventually every capable retired English teacher could serve for another one, two, five, or even more years. With perhaps some adjustment between an annual pension and the salary at retirement—an important detail to be worked out—almost every institution, no matter how large or small, could occasionally or continuously afford and benefit by the services of at least one unusually well qualified visiting professor. In fact, some colleges and universities might desire to set up a permanent Visiting Professorship in English which it would keep filled by different retired personnel year after year.

Exchange Professorships

II. Problem. Different institutions have different plans, methods, courses, problems—and we usually learn about them only through oc-

the present becomes a relatively unimportant spot of time in the ascent to ideal achievement.

Hold Our Own

However, these last values are subsidiary to the essential ones which I have described. If we are to preserve and to advance the place our subject should hold in the curricula, we must first become absolutely clear in our minds of what are the life values inherent in the study of literature and then fight for their preservation as a vital part of any school or college program of study.

OSCAR JAMES CAMPBELL
Columbia University

casional regional or national meetings or through occasional published articles. A year's service by an established teacher as a visiting professor—especially by one in charge of or directing a specific course—would render unmeasured service to the teacher himself, to the institution visited, and, with what he learns and sees, to his own institution when he returns. I should not advocate this plan as an annual policy for any one school but perhaps once every three, four, or five years, and certainly on a far more extensive scale than it has been practiced in the past.

To appreciate others' problems and establish better understanding, schools might exchange with those of a somewhat different type: large and small, junior college and university, liberal arts college and technical school, small town and urban schools; different geographical areas, and the like. Numerous details, such as salary (should each institution pay its own absent staff member?) One small school said otherwise it would have to send two of its staff to get one visitor in exchange!) would have to be worked out but there are no insuperable problems. It does seem, however, that encouragement should be given staff members in their thirties or forties as the most logical candidates for exchange professorships, and that unmarried people also, unencumbered by house, furniture (and debts?) might more easily pull up roots and be transplanted for such a year's exchange. Limitations of any kind, however, should be few and flexible.

Solution. Institutions desiring to profit by such a system of exchange professorships could pay a stated small fee to the CEA Appointment Bureau, indicating the kind of college or university with which it desired to exchange, and giving full details concerning its own candidate. The chief task, then, would be matching or bringing together each two institutions with similar desires.

GEORGE S. WYKOFF
Purdue Univ.

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Student and Teacher
 (Continued from Page 1)
An Effective Method

Shortly before his death, Ernest Van Keuren and I experimented briefly with a new method for both surveying and evaluating student opinion. The following student evaluation plan is based on a paper written in collaboration with him. Our procedure involved the collaboration of two teachers in the same department, each appraising the material collected from his colleague's class. This material was not a questionnaire; it was an essay. The student was given a statement of the objectives of the course; and in the light of these, he answered two questions: What was he getting out of the course? and How could the conduct of the course be improved?

If one was to get students to take the matter seriously, there must be motivation; the motive was provided by requiring the essay as a regular assignment, equivalent to a week's work. In order to get candid responses, the students were assured that their teacher would never see their papers, that the grading would be done by a colleague familiar with the course. The grade, of course, was recorded and affected the student's standing. On the assigned date, the papers were collected by this colleague, and they remained permanently in his possession.

The students were also told that at the end of the term, after all grades were recorded, their teacher would receive a summary of student opinion. In drawing up this summary, the colleague-reader could give special weight to the opinion of students who were best qualified to make sound judgments. To determine who these were, he would take into account the students' grades in this and similar courses and their point average for all college work. And, of course, the essays themselves revealed a great deal about the ability of the students to make intelligent appraisal of a teacher.

How the Method Works

"In evaluating the course and the teacher my first step is to evaluate

myself." The student who began his essay with these words was making explicit that which was implicit in all the reports: self-evaluation and self-revelation. It was this dimension that gave the readers of these reports an opportunity—notably absent in "objective" questionnaires—to interpret them in an objective manner.

The value of requiring students to select and organize their comments was revealed rather vividly in several papers. One student wrote: "I believe that many so-called 'gripes' which may be heard from the students will be less frequent when these serious course analyses are accumulated." As they wrestled with this problem, students did make some very specific recommendations. Often they disagreed. For instance, some protested against oral student reports to the class on the ground that the instructor was more worth listening to; others accepted them as providing good experience in facing an audience. Other topics stressed were: 1. the advantage of going over written tests in class so as to prevent the repetition of errors; 2. the merit of discussing a literary work as a whole rather than section by section; 3. the stimulating effect of rapid fire and enthusiastic discussion by the teacher; 4. the danger of emasculating discussion if the teacher does not deal tactfully with students who disagree with him; 5. the educational gain through tests that are thought provoking and give practice in organizing materials.

Throughout our experiment we were consistently impressed with the high quality of the essays turned in. Students were not only willing but eager to express their convictions; moreover, their work was characterized by sincerity and by a genuine sensitiveness to real values—this despite the fact that they were not exceptional students. As a result, we felt we had accumulated a body of trustworthy material.

Applications

We felt, too, that in broad practice the collaboration feature of our program would have definitely beneficial results. It insured the student against penalties for adverse criticism. It guaranteed to the instructor a degree of professional judgment, for his colleague, teaching the same or similar subjects, would be familiar with the classroom problems of the particular course. It aided the reader, for he got an insight into the techniques of his colleague and into student reaction to them. And the final summary guided the teacher in adapting his own classroom procedure to student needs.

The final step, of course, would be to put these summaries into the hands of administrative officers. Many will object to doing so. And certainly no department head should consider them a definitive report on his faculty. But if he had a few such summaries for each of his teachers, we believe he would possess documents which would prove very useful as he faced the perennial problem of making recommendations for promotions in his staff.

The Time Is Ripe

If we do not evaluate ourselves in this way or in some other way formulated and controlled by ourselves, we will have it done for us—by the educationists or administrationists. In that event, we will get

WHAT LINGUISTICS?

To James T. Barr's proposal in the Oct. 1953 *CEA Critic* that all English majors be required to take a course in linguistics, I have these comments.

Such a course is certainly advantageous. I think even all freshman English students should spend some time on the history of the language, both because it is interesting and because once students have come to realize that English was not invented yesterday but was built up in layers they begin to understand why things are in their present snarl.

However, the course as outlined seems to be designed to teach students that they can justify the use of the double negative in twentieth-century English by an appeal to the authority of Shakespeare. I suppose this would also legalize these early Modern forms (probably misquoted, as they are cited from memory): "How far the little candle throws it beams." "Mars his sword." "Goes the king hence today?"

I doubt the soundness of any course which teaches that anything in good usage in the sixteenth century is in good usage today. I rise up amazed when the authority is not Shakespeare but (angels and ministers of grace defend us!) King Alfred. It would be more to the point if the double negative could be found in the non-colloquial, non-dialect prose of any good contemporary author.

I also fail to see the desirability of spending a semester to justify what today is sub-standard English. It strikes me that most students, English majors included, are fully capable of incorrect English without taking special instruction in it. Something like the double negative can be defended only on the grounds that it is usage, which in modern written English it manifestly is not, and I do not understand why some people should be interested in resurrecting it and forcing other people to use it. If it were occasionally used, like the split infinitive, it might be treated as permissible; but I would see no excuse even then for trying to make people use it if it did not come naturally to them.

SAMUEL J. SACKETT
UCLA

**C. E. A. LIMERICK OF
OF THE MONTH**

My English professor is quaint;
He finds too much cause for complaint.
Of this I am surest,
I won't be a purist.
He don't think I am, and I ain't.
—B. J.

February Supplement

This month, *CEA Critic* readers are receiving copies of *Career Opportunities for Majors in English*, prepared by the English Department of Indiana University.

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Teacher Education in Michigan

[This report on what is afoot in Michigan will seem familiar to anyone who has read Professor Bestor's *Educational Wastelands*. It furnishes another instance of the unremitting attempt of the educationists to drive humanistic and scientific scholarship out of the school system. We believe, with Professor Bestor, that scholars are duty-bound to interest themselves again in the problems of public education—John Virtue, reporter.]

A Michigan committee of educationists deriving its authority from the Michigan State Board of Education has for several years been engaged in revising the state's Teacher Certification Code. During the past year it has issued two progress reports which are essentially identical, though the second is furnished with a lengthy commentary-and-apologia. The committee apparently expects its proposals to be approved by the Board and enacted by the legislature this year. If this happens, the cause of sound education will have suffered a blow the effects of which will be felt in every school, college, and university in Michigan.

Anti-Intellectualism

The committee's attitude toward learning is suggested by a statement in the commentary: "...the prospective teacher who demonstrates that his interest is primarily in the acquisition of knowledge in a particular subject matter field, cannot be calculated to have an equally fundamental interest in the welfare of children." The fuzziness and obliquity of the statement do not conceal the committee's meaning: social service is to supplant learning in the schools.

Inspection of the "general education" requirement of the proposed code reveals the practical issue of this anti-intellectual bias. Under this requirement, it would be almost impossible for a prospective teacher to get serious, systematic training in any subject, including the subjects he might be called upon to teach. Meagerness of knowledge and shallowness of culture, it appears, are to be the earmarks of the

new schoolmaster. What will happen to the learned disciplines, and to the professions which are founded upon them, when the products of his ministrations reach mature years?

The Code Summarized

The significant items of the proposed new code are summarized below. This summary is based on the second report, but a passage in the first is used to clear up a vagueness in one section.

The proposed code 1. would require the compliance of all institutions, including private liberal arts colleges, that train teachers; and it would therefore oblige these institutions to reconstitute, in some measure, their programs of study and their staffs; 2. would set up the following requirements for the B.A. and B.S. degrees with certificate: a. 30 hours in "professional education," (35 for the General Certificate), instead of the presently required 20 hours. b. 40 hours in "general education," defined as "communications arts, social science, and science" (in the second report: the first adds "fine arts, practical arts, family living, and citizenship education," which are latent, or implicit, in the vaguer phrasing of this section of the second); c. (as part of the 40 hours in "general education") at least 15 hours in "inter-disciplinary" courses, among which are named (in the first report, but not in the second, which here again resorts to vagueness) "Implications of Sociology and Anthropology for Education," "The Role of Culture in Personality Formation," "Fine and Practical Arts and their Implications for Education," "Leadership Training for Community Service and Improvement," "Social and Group Processes and their Implications for Education," "The Social Implications of Science and Mathematics".

Also the proposed code 3. would permit candidates for a bachelor's degree with certificate to take concentrations up to 20 hours in "general education" subjects—this in lieu of the present requirement of a major (24 hours) and two minors (15 hours each) in traditional subjects; 4. would permit a candidate for a bachelor's degree with certificate to take a 24-hour major in "professional education," in addition to the prescribed 30-35 hours; 5. would provide that the temporary certificate awarded with the bachelor's degree, should be convertible into a permanent certificate (after three years of meritorious teaching in the field) on the earning of a master's degree—almost certainly in "professional education"; 6. would institute a (new) General Certificate, which would license the holder to teach at any level from grade 4 through grade 12.

The "Inter-disciplinary" courses (section 2-c above) deserve a word. It seems unlikely that such courses as those named would be taught by trained sociologists, psychologists, artists, or masters of any other discipline. It therefore seems probable that they would be taught by educationists. Accordingly at least 15 hours of the "general education" of prospective teachers would consist of additional courses in "professional education."

Academic Qualifications

Now, to envisage at a glance the sort of teacher likely to be the products of this code, consider the

THE BATTLE IS ON

The proposed Michigan Code illustrates clearly the determination of persons closely associated with public education in the United States to insure the full development of a program already far advanced. This program emphasizes not only the social orientation of teaching, and the social service function of the American school, but also calls in question the importance of the values and disciplines which have traditionally been attached to learning in specified subjects fields.

Needed: Greater Command of Subject Matter

That education in a democracy must concern itself with social orientation, the inculcation of a sense of social responsibility, and attention to the development of proper attitudes in young men and women, cannot be doubted. It may fairly be asked, however, whether these matters are not now receiving sufficient attention as objectives which can be approached directly, and whether more efforts should not now be made to increase, by a severer discipline, the students' methods by which knowledge is obtained and advanced.

There is much to be said for the view that many desirable ends are best obtained obliquely, that by indirect we find direction out. It appears to many that teachers are now adequately acquainted, through the courses in Education which they are required to pursue, with the philosophy summarized in Professor Kilpatrick's recent article in the December 21 issue of the *New Republic*, and that their competence

and confidence in the classroom is more likely to be increased by their thorough command of subject fields than by additional training of this sort.

And Exact Knowledge

With attempts to improve teaching effectiveness through supervised practise and laboratory courses in methods most educators will be in accord. A study of the results of the instruction now given in almost all fields—English, foreign languages, mathematics, sciences, civics, history, etc.—indicates that a great deal must be done if the secondary schools are to produce, in increasing numbers, graduates who can undertake, with reasonable prospects of success, college or university work conducted on a respectable level.

One of the factors in this process must be the really adequate preparation of teachers in the fields which they are assigned to teach. Any program which limits their attention to subject matter, or which makes further substitutions of the general for the specific, of attitudes for exact knowledge, is likely to prove harmful.

Or English May Be Lost

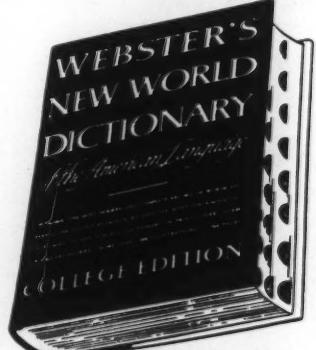
As far as English is concerned, there is considerable likelihood that, if current tendencies continue unchecked, it will be absorbed in the still undefined complex called communications, and attached loosely to the social sciences. If this happens, we may probably expect that the humanistic and cultural values which teachers of English have traditionally inculcated will be, in a large measure, lost.

WARNER G. RICE

Chairman Dept. of English
Univ. of Michigan

[Ed. Note: Prof. Rice is chairman of the Michigan CEA Committee on "The Michigan Code."]

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Semantics in Action

[This article describes the kind of technique being used more and more widely in discussion groups throughout the country. It was well exemplified in the Adult Education Conference chaired by Hayakawa in Chicago last spring.—Ed.]

For the past two years, Standard Oil and Gas Company and Service Pipe Line Company have presented for their employees a discussion program called, "Let's Talk It Over." The problems and questions discussed have been many and varied, but for some of us who have served as discussion leaders it has been a particularly interesting experience in "semantics in action."

Discussion groups usually numbered from twenty to thirty participants, with each group meeting for approximately an hour each day for four days. Leaders for the discussions came from universities in the Middle West, the Southwest, and the Rocky Mountains. In this "report with examples," I should like to suggest a few of the semantic principles some of us used to improve communication.

"Group Dynamics"

For one thing, as many of the principles of "Group Dynamics" as possible were employed. The participants either already knew each other, or became acquainted at least by the end of the first session. Each one wore a large name card, large enough to be seen throughout the room. An "A" board (or flip chart) was used, as well as the blackboard, to direct and summarize the discussion.

Group opinion was derived from the discussion, with differences of viewpoint being harmonized wherever possible by the group itself. The leader then served as a "re-stating" agent, or as a catalytic agent. Of course, attempts were made to include as many members as possible in the discussion. By the second session, the discussion leader even went so far as to call on the less vocal members by name to lead them into participation.

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Careful Listening

The need of listening carefully became immediately apparent— for the leader especially, but also for the participants. Group members had to make on-the-subject comments and ask intelligent questions. That in turn meant they had to hear not only what the leader said, but what anyone else in the room said. And the leader had to be acute to pick up comments that might be important but missed altogether if not emphasized. For example, in a discussion on how to write to congressmen, the discussion leader heard a half-muttered, "They'd just throw the letter in the waste-basket anyhow." Since it was vital to get the group's opinion on the value of letting officials know what they thought, the discussion leader repeated the statement for the group and asked what they thought about it. At the same time, he took care to ask for any personal experience behind the original half-spoken comment.

"Play-Back"

One of the most consistently useful devices was the "play-back" technique. Since the leader was mainly trying to clarify and systematize what was said, he was almost constantly re-stating comments, with the added question, "Is that what you mean?" Some of us noted that by the third session,

many of the participants were doing the same thing with comments made by fellow workers. In some instances, this allowed half-expressed ideas to be more clearly stated; in other instances, it led to further re-statements by the original commentator until everyone gave tacit assent that he understood what was intended; in still other instances, it showed up clearly untenable viewpoints and helped to reveal attitudes behind overt statements.

Sometimes the play-back brought up the "real" idea in the participant's mind—and sometimes it led to the fact that he was repeating phrases on high levels without checking against the extensional world. For instance, we got the response, "We have too much bureaucratic government." The leader asked if that meant we should eliminate all federal bureaus. The answer was, "Well, no, not the FBI." Etc. Like this too were the stereotype answers such as the one to "What determines how much freedom a man has?" the answer that invariably came first was, "His wife."

Abstraction Levels

Awareness of the abstraction process was another almost constantly helpful device. Much of the discussion began on fairly high levels of abstraction, as we expected. And at times, the participants seemed to feel that they had actually communicated information on these high levels, in spite of the fact that they had only made appropriate and expected noises. The next step, and a most vital one if the meetings were really to get anywhere, was to come down the abstraction ladder to lower levels.

For example, in discussing the "duties" of citizenship, we moved down to such items as "voting." The next step was on down to "voting when and how," thence on to how we register and mark a ballot. Or in discussing the abstract idea of "competition" in business, we immediately moved to actual

examples such as what happened to consumer costs. Then we discussed what happened in selling radios, television sets, etc. Finally, if possible, we got down to "what happened to me as an actual experience."

Context

In almost every session we encountered the importance of context in determining meaning, along with many examples of how ignoring context blocked communication.

Some word or phrase would enter the discussion, meaning one thing to part of the group and something else to the rest. Unless the leader, or some one in the group, insisted on getting the different contexts out in the open, any kind of general agreement was impossible.

In Texas, for example, warm discussions on the "Tidelands" usually brought out a basic difference of meaning as the participants used the term. For many, it meant simply the "beach" lands covered by high tide but not by low tide. And "Quit-claim" bill or no, that is just what the word "really" meant to several. When in one session I pointed out how all words might shift meaning as people found new contexts, this answer came back, "But this involves millions of dollars!"

Reports vs Judgments

Finally, there was plenty of occasion to suggest how necessary it is to distinguish between reports and judgments. Here, of course, the leader had to be tactful since so many times some one insisted that his judgment was really a report or "the facts" as they usually said. Indeed, one of the basic points of the entire program was to "get the facts." On this idea there was almost complete agreement. "Yes," they said, "you have to get the facts first."

But when the necessity arose to distinguish between "facts" and "opinions," we found no such general agreement. If the discussions were to get anywhere, however, it was highly important to consider the difference between report and non-report statements.

For example, someone remarked, "According to the morning paper the Army is going to draft more men." And back came the sweeping judgment, "We ought to drop the A-bomb on Russia." One technique the leader often used in such situations was to suggest, "That's one way to look at it—are there any other ways?" By getting a variety of opinions (without calling them by the word "opinion"), it was usually possible then to show that what the first person had said was just one among many judgments.

But for the group to arrive at any kind of synthesis in the discussion, it was imperative not only to get the facts, but also to agree on what was a report and what wasn't. Difficult as it often was to get the facts, it was even more difficult to persuade someone that he was offering a judgment as though it was a report. Since such distinctions came as something new to most of the participants, the discussion had to proceed by using "easy" words and examples.

Is There Carry-Over?

To be sure, it was almost impossible to determine how much of these techniques stayed with the members. From our experience,

we felt fairly certain that the devices of semantics did help toward mutual understanding and often agreement—that is, where the leader brought these devices into play. Whether the members used them the next time they got into an argument we do not know. It is true that almost all the people in the sessions (numbering several thousand persons) reported to impartial interviewers that they enjoyed the programs and felt that the time was well spent. We hope that there was a carry-over into other areas and that these instances of "semantics in action" were not unique.

DONALD E. HAYDEN
The Univ. of Tulsa

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THE FOURTH DIMENSION OF LANGUAGE

In an article in *School and Society* for Feb. 6, 1952, Professors W. E. Bull and Norman J. DeWitt note the assumption of the many that sufficient language is a something of limited length and breadth, with just enough thickness to keep it from sagging under ordinary household conditions. That language has a fourth dimension, that is, that we cannot restrict our vocabulary perceptions to the here and now of a mediocre "functionalism" if we are to become and remain alive to the full-fledged demands of life and letters, is a fact to which even many of our most influential professional educators give little thought.

Not Prepared

After years of half-hearted contact with English, the most important of all subjects in general education, zealously guarded in most places against Latin and other "foreign" infiltration, students essay, for example, the conquest of Spanish, which has the ridiculous reputation among us of being "easy." But Spanish, with its Latinic words in natural relationship to the huge Latin and French element in English, quickly "throws them for a loss." They are not ready for the task they have blithely undertaken, and, supposing they can maintain ambition to succeed in it, must begin their language life over again. For now they can see, if their linguistic handicap has not blinded them, that all genuine language knowledge implies a wider and deeper combination of causes and effects than modern fashionable education had planned for it.

Of what large avail is storing up delusive "minimum" vocabularies when meaning in the actual experiences of listening and speaking depends upon the knowledge of words outside that narrow pale? It is clear that if the student fed on superficiality tries to advance beyond the educational cloths he will immediately confront words non-understood or misunderstood, and that

his induced dependence upon word counts can therefore do great harm to an inherently capable mind.

We've Been Too Obliging

The rejectors of Latin, a discipline which, along with assiduous reading of the Bible, once put a substantial floor under the linguistic upbringing of large numbers, are emphatically among those who need to be reminded of that "fourth dimension." It is they who are largely responsible that students inferior in English-language background are poured into the hundreds of literature courses prepared for them by obliging administrators, cooperating with obliging teachers of English naturally eager for the prestige of numbers and security in position, who, in their turn finding the word-and-style understanding of their charges impossible to adapt to literature's demands, take refuge in a general falling back upon mere idea-discussion, leaving language to wilt still further upon the vine.

As long as the schools treat language as just another limited subject, instead of as one basic for all others, or treat it as a sort of assembly-line construction, it will remain in an ailing state, and humanistic ideals among the many will not prosper.

Increasing Provincialism

As for foreign languages, we have lost the facility for learning them, and are increasingly shying away from them in recognition of our fundamental linguistic unpreparedness. Thus our well-known provinciality, in this time of instantaneous worldwide communication, is growing—an astounding phenomenon, no doubt, to those who, like so many of our latter-day educational guides, imagine themselves as regards language teaching in the very forefront of science just because larger numbers than before can read up to a certain utility-minimum.

If our education in language were correctly assessed and treated, that disgraceful stopping point would not be there to plague students and their teachers in all fields. The prescribers of our language affairs will have to acquire a more definite vision of the nature of language, and a truly modern, which happens to be also the ancient, conception of the "science" of its learning. Above all, let not those prescribe who, in their own persons, in their own spoken and written records, show no evidence of capacity in the proper clothing of thought. There should be a great deal of writing upon this urgent topic, especially on the part of influential professors of English. Literary research can wait. Our American language necessities cannot.

A. M. WITHERS
Virginia Polytechnic Inst.

Note on Zola's *Fécondité*

One of the more grotesque tricks in nineteenth-century fiction is Emile Zola's recurrent antiphonal chant that runs through the Fourth Book of *Fécondité*. One part begins with the opening paragraph of the first chapter:

Quatre ans se passerent. Et, pendant ces quatre ans, Mathieu et Marianne eurent deux enfants encore...

and continues for twelve lines more to the end of the paragraph. Each of the remaining chapters begins, "Deux ans se passerent," and with some minor variations, chiefly biological, repeats the prolog theme down to the end of paragraph one.

By way of responsory, each chapter in the Book winds up with a nearly identical cadenza. The second paragraph from the end opens thus:

A Chantebled, Mathieu et Marianne fondaient, créaient, enfantaient.

This sentence and the dozen lines that follow are repeated without change in the corresponding paragraphs of chapters two, three, four, and five. Also the last nine lines of each chapter, including the final paragraph, are the same: "Encore un enfant", etc., etc.

These heavy thematic passages, opening and closing each chapter, produce an effective climax unless the reader is put to sleep by the repetition. They show Zola at his moralistic best—or worst.

As if entranced himself, Zola commits an amusing blunder toward the end of the last chapter of his novel, where he is describing a great feast in celebration of a gathering of the clan Froment. Calling the roll of the heads of families, he remarks of Frédéric's progeny:

...les quatre ayant ensemble un petit troupeau de quinze enfants, tant filles que garçons.

There it is: but *Fécondité* is a long work and more than one Homeric nod might have been allowed. (There are others.) If nudged here, Zola probably would have been only too happy to come to truce with elementary arithmetic and write seize.

TOM BURNS HABER
Ohio State

Poetry Reading Contest

Fifteen years ago Newark College of Rutgers began a poetry reading contest which has now become so popular that last time it was held there were almost eighty contestants and the affair was given a full-page write-up with photographs in last July's *Seventeen*. The little newsheet sent out with its bills by the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company also carried a story about the contest.

The entrants are given a carefully selected list of 200 poetry selections ranging from the Bible to T. S. Eliot from which to choose. The judges look for quiet, intelligent reading of poetry, not for old-time dramatics. The fact that some 75 high schools throughout the state select the finalists who come to Newark testifies to the general interest in poetry. Upwards of 50,000 children have by now taken part.

The English Club of Newark College sponsors the readings and Professors Edward Huberman and Stephen Dewitt Stephens, together with distinguished American poets, housewives, and businessmen, act as judges.

The Crown and the Laurel, a book of poetry by A. E. Johnson (Syracuse), has been awarded a prize in a world-wide competition held by *Books of the Month*. Judge in the contest was C. Day Lewis, Professor of Poetry at Oxford. *The Crown and the Laurel* can be obtained from the Syracuse University Book Store.

Footnote

One of my former students, calling on me last summer, said: "That course of yours in Nineteenth Century Prose was the best one I ever had in my life." I was trying to look modest and make deprecating gestures when she added, thoughtfully: "It's true, my sister Ruth took it, too, and she says the only thing she remembers from it is that William Morris didn't invent the Morris chair."

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I been intrigued by them profs as write in your magazine how English is a live language therefore we shouldn't worry about no double negatives and such stuff. Why don't them guys write live English themselves instead of the dull grammar type language they all the time use in their articles?

V. F. HOPPER
Professor of Pretty Good English, N.Y.U.

February, 1954

THE CEA CRITIC

Page SEVEN

CHICAGO ROUND TABLE

On Jan. 24 Gilbert W. Chapman, President, Yale & Towne Manufacturing Company; Louis M. Lyons, Curator, Nieman Foundation for the Advancement of Journalism, Harvard Univ.; and Albert L. Nickerson, Vice-President and Director in Charge of Foreign Trade, Socony-Vacuum Oil Company, Inc. discussed "Industry and the Liberal Arts" on the Chicago Round Table.

Several times during the program reference was made to the CEA and to the Corning Institute. Some highlights from the broadcast follow:

Objectivity and the Liberal Arts

Nickerson: "In my view, a man who has a good liberal arts education can see things as they really are. He's objective, can see a situation without any distortion. He can analyze a complex situation, discard irrelevant things, and go immediately to the point...."

"Since 1939 we have been in a seller's market. The emphasis has been on production. There is reason to believe that in the buyer's market that is starting now industry will be more interested than it has been in hiring the liberal arts graduate."

Discussions Needed

Chapman: "I don't believe that American businessmen and educators have ever really sat down and tried to reach some solution as to what the technical schools should teach today and the type of boy they should produce. I think that a very great deal could be accomplished by a group of educators and businessmen trying to set down certain specifications. Out of this perhaps would come a boy better qualified to meet the requirements of today."

Lyons: "Don't you think that businessmen might do a little more taking of the lead in suggesting to

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THE CEA CRITIC

PAUL HAINES ON CEA INSTITUTES

their academic friends more specifically what they want to get?"

Chapman: "We don't want businessmen to tell educators how to educate. But they can tell them what they want in the way of graduates."

Nickerson: "I think that this development of the CEA is an extraordinarily hopeful sign that educators are taking more of an interest in and learning more about how industry actually works. I think that on our side of the fence we should show an equal amount of interest in educational subjects and do our best to tell educators what we consider important."

Chapman: "I believe that the liberal arts give to a man a moral and spiritual fiber that he can get no other way in education."

Chicago Round Table Report a
Critic Supplement

By special arrangement with The CEA Institute and the publishers, The Chicago Round Table is making available, with the booklet covering the broadcast of January 24, copies of the SR Report on the CEA Institute at Corning. The booklet itself will contain an adapted version of Albert L. Nickerson's Corning address "Business and Human Values," and Gilbert W. Chapman's "The Opportunity Ahead," an S/R guest editorial based on The CEA Institute at Corning. As a supplement to the March 1954 CEA Critic, this Chicago Round Table report will reach all CEA members, as well as members and friends of the CEA Institute. This distribution is made possible through the courtesy of the Socony-Vacuum Oil Co., Inc., and the Yale & Towne Manufacturing Co.

Davidson's Corning Institute
Address Published

The Bulletin of the Association of American Colleges for December, 1953 (XXIX, No. 4, pp. 565-571) contains the address that Dr. Carter Davidson, President of Union College, presented at The CEA Institute at Corning. It is entitled: "Spelling Out Specifics in Business-Liberal Art Exchange: A College President's View." Himself a former English professor, President Davidson is Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Empire State Association of Independent Colleges. A limited number of reprints are available and may be secured through the office of the President, Union College.

English composition, the one college course every freshman must master, is going on TV March 1 from Indiana University. A unique aspect of this "television first" from the Hoosier University is that seniors from at least seven high schools are expected to get pre-college help by viewing the programs.

Dean W. W. Wright of the Indiana University School of Education said principals of all high schools in the viewing area of Bloomington Station WTTV are being informed of the plan to help prospective college freshmen over this academic hurdle.

The course will also be available on a college credit basis to all adult viewers of Station WTTV. The high school students will receive a certificate of completion at the end of the course, but not college credit.

I am sending out announcements of the 1954 SECEA meeting, to be held at Winthrop College, Rock Hill, South Carolina, on February 19-20.

The theme of our meeting, Careers and the Liberal Arts, should be of interest to English teachers in the smaller colleges as well as to those in the larger ones, to teachers in schools for girls as well as to those in the technical or vocational institutions.

I think that English department chairmen, some of whom have seen their major elected by fewer and inferior students, may be especially interested in a practical resurgence of the notion that the liberal arts are practical.

Many Have Wondered

A good many responsible English teachers have wondered just where and how their liberal arts graduates are to fit into the nation's working life.

A good many responsible managers of industry have said that our economic organizations urgently need men and women with disciplined and wide-ranging minds, that a specialized technological training may not help the students to develop this flexibility or tonicity of mind, and that the liberal arts may not be impractical after all.

Not Without Hope

I'm hopeful but not too hopeful. I know that industrial recruiters will continue to interview a preponderance of youngsters with

some sort of specialized technological training.

Indeed, it is not our purpose to talk technology down.

I am encouraged by the CEA Institutes rather because they have enabled us to deal with responsible representatives of business and industry, to assert the just claims of the liberal arts, and to demonstrate our own competence and responsibility as educators of young men and women for managerial positions.

Encouraging Novelty

The Institutes deal with an old theme. The managers of the world's affairs have always, I suppose, been former schoolboys: there was Alexander of Macedon. The city fathers have always complained that what the schoolmasters taught was not practical enough, and the schoolmasters have defended their article. Yes, that's old stuff.

Nevertheless in the incipient collaboration between American humanists and American men of affairs, I find certain elements which are novel and encouraging: candor, a minimum of occupational provincialism, a maturity and scope of intelligence, mutual respect.

PAUL HAINES

SECEA President
Alabama Polytechnic Institute

(Participant, CEA-sponsored meeting on Industry, Liberal Arts Exchange, Johnny Victor Theatre, RCA Exhibition Hall, Sept. 1952).

Regional

SECEA

Annual Meeting: Winthrop College, Rock Hill, South Carolina, Feb. 19-20, 1954. Theme: "Careers and the Liberal Arts." Among the speakers: Nathan Starr (Univ. of Florida), past Fulbright Lecturer in Japan, past president SECEA; Ellsworth Chun, education director, Southern Division, NAM; Kenneth Knickerbocker (Univ. of Tennessee) Seminar Leader, CEA Institute at Corning; Philip G. Hammer, Exec. Officer, Committee of the South (Atlanta, Ga.); Paul Stoakes (Florida State Univ.)

Copies of the S/R Report and the Nickerson Corning address may be secured, in the SECEA area, (Ala., Fla., Ga., S.C.) from Paul Haines, 128 Burton St., Auburn, Ala. Copies of the other items may be secured, in the same area, from Celesta Wine.

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1954 CEA INSTITUTE

June 23-25, Kellogg Center, Michigan State College, East Lansing.

Though official invitations have not yet been issued, the response to preliminary announcements is lively. If you think you may come, please let both of the following know: Prof. Clyde Henson, English Department, Michigan State College, East Lansing; and Prof. Maxwell H. Goldberg, CEA Institute Director, 11 Old Chapel, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

The preliminary sessions on June 23 are designed for in-the-family talk among university administrators and teachers of English and other humanities. The discussions will be focussed on humanistic studies and liberal education for adults. Yet crucial terms, concepts, and problems fundamental to the humanities and other liberal arts and sciences in our time will be closely scrutinized.

At least one national radio program will feature The CEA Institute at Michigan State. George E. Probst, director of the University of Chicago Round Table, is serving as Institute consultant.

The outlook is promising for the publication of the Institute proceedings by a university press.

The Kellogg Center is especially designed for gatherings such as The CEA Institute. It has lodging facilities for some two hundred; and for greater numbers, there are dormitories located directly across the road. The Center has fifteen conference rooms, an auditorium seating 355, banquet rooms and a ballroom, dining facilities for at least 1,000 persons. The Center will handle press and other public relations, record sessions, and furnish printed summaries. It will furnish transportation to and from trains and airfield. It will arrange entertainment by such groups as the Dow-Corning chorus of sixty voices.

Among those who are to participate are: Governor Mennen Williams of Michigan; Commissioner of Education John Desmond Jr., of Massachusetts; J. Wilson Newman, President of Dun & Bradstreet, Inc.

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Ground Rules for CEA Members

1. The CEA year is the calendar year (i. e. from January through December). There are nine issues of *The CEA Critic* published during each year, as well as a number of supplements. All supplementary material is sent to all members.

2. Dues are payable on the first of the year. Members not paying by April receive a "Second Notice." Those who have not paid by September will not receive the September *Critic*, or further *Critics* unless payment is made. Their names will go into the "Arrears" file, and they will receive a final notice.

3. Bureau of Appointments payments are credited for twelve months from the time of payment. But only CEA members will receive Bureau of Appointment service. Prospective employers, of course, need not be CEA members.

4. Clearly indicate on all membership blanks the address to which you wish us to send your CEA publications. Let us know promptly of any changes, and again, indicate where and how your CEA mail is to be sent.

5. If you do not receive a bill, you may conclude we have payment for you for the current year. If you receive a bill, and think you have paid, please let us know. We handle large numbers of records and there is much room for error.

6. Please pay promptly. By doing so, you will save us the process described in Paragraph 2. The money we save will be used for enriching the material we send to you through the year.

Bureau of Appointments

The CEA Bureau of Appointments is maintained by Albert Madeira (Box 472, Amherst, Mass.) as a service to CEA members. The only charge, in addition to national CEA membership, is \$5.00 for a twelve-month registration. Registrants who are not CEA members should include with their registration fee the annual membership fee of \$3.50—\$1.50 for dues and \$2.00 for subscription to the *CEA Critic*. Registration does not guarantee placement. Prospective employers are invited to use the services of the CEA Bureau of Appointments. (No charge.)

Calif. CEA
Spring meeting, Mar. 6, 1954 at Loyola Univ. Los Angeles. At the 1953 spring meeting, UCLA, Leon Howard spoke on "American Literature in Japan"; and there was a panel on freshman English.

Majl Ewing, Chmn. of English at UCLA, entertained the group at tea. The 1953 fall meeting was held in conjunction with the sessions of the Philological Assn. of the Pacific Coast. This pattern will be repeated for the fall meeting, with the Calif. CEA this time acting as host. Mitchell Marcus, PAPC Sect.-Treas., is regional president.

Penna. CEA

Annual meeting, Penna. State Univ. April 24, beginning at 10 a.m. Local Chmn.: Bryce Harris. Local committee includes Fred Gwynn and national CEA president William Werner.

NECEA

Spring meeting May 8, Univ. of R. I. Kingston. President: Franklin Norvish, Northeastern. Sect.-Treas.: Curtis Dahl, Wh-aton. On local committee: past NECEA president Walter Simmons; NE CEA director Warren Smith.

Mich. CEA

Fall meeting at U. of Mich. Dec. 5, 1953. Leslie Hanawalt (Wayne) reported on the Corning CEA conference, saying that this fifth CEA Institute showed how much the views of academicians and businessmen coincide. Clyde Henson (MSC) announced plans for the CEA Institute to be held at the Kellogg Adult Education Center on the campus of Mich. State College on June 23, 24, and 25, 1954.

A panel made up of Warner Rice (UM), John Virtue (MSNC), and Robert Limpus (WMC) discussed the "Proposals for Revision of the Certification Code." At the conclusion of the discussion the members agreed that the proposals were worthy of severe condemnation. The most successful way to respond to the challenge, however, was not to utter defiance, but to seek out means to improve the preparation of teachers by academic departments so as to destroy the force of the educationists' argument that academicians were ignoring the professional needs of their students.

The spring MCEA meeting will be held at Western Mich. College.

A Manual and Drill Book

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